

From: Fiore, Davina
To: All Members
Cc: Directors;
Sent: Wed Jan 04 14:49:00 2012
Subject: Safeguarding Advice for members considering accepting the offer to shadow a care worker for the day

I understand some members may be considering accepting the offer made by a member of the public (who does not work for the Council, although a family member may do so) to assist you to shadow a care worker for the day. Obviously the offer may relate to services which are not provided by the Council. It is of course for each of you to decide whether you wish to take up this invitation, but to ensure both that the privacy and dignity of clients is protected, and that you are protected from complaints that you have breached the Code of Conduct, please read and take account of this advice before doing so.

You are of course aware that the nature of care work means that care workers often engage with vulnerable people to provide personal care, which is often intimate care such as washing, bathing, showering, toileting. It also gives them access to and knowledge of sensitive personal information, such as health and financial information. This information and the privacy and dignity of clients is very important. Their privacy and dignity must be safeguarded and their personal information should not be disclosed or made available to anyone who does not need to know the information to provide care, unless the specific consent of the client has been obtained.

Therefore you should only shadow a care worker if the specific consent of the client to your presence has been given, and if the organisation responsible for providing the care (the employer of any care worker you shadow) has agreed to your presence. This is obviously further complicated where the service user may not have the mental capacity to give informed consent. When this is the case you should not attend. As you know, your Code of Conduct requires you to treat others with respect. If you were to shadow a care worker in giving personal care it is very important that the service user understands who you are, why you are there and has the opportunity to decline your presence without being concerned that refusal may impact on the service they receive. Failure to ensure this informed consent has been given would breach the privacy and dignity of clients and would be likely to mean you are in breach of the requirement in the code of conduct to treat others with respect.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any queries, please contact me.

May I take this opportunity to say I hope you all had a good Christmas break and to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Davina

Davina Fiore | Deputy Director of Resources (Corporate Governance) & Monitoring Officer